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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Draft Platform for Action

Addendum

Chapter IV

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

K. [Lack of adequate recognition and support for] [Promote] women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment] [Women and the environment]

171. Human beings are at the centre of concern for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.* Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns, and approaches to natural resource management, as was recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development and reflected throughout Agenda 21. Awareness of resource depletion, the degradation of natural systems and the dangers of polluting substances increased markedly in the past decade. These worsening conditions are destroying fragile ecosystems, displacing communities, especially women, from productive activities and are an increasing threat to a safe and healthy

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* The text is not in brackets but the inclusion of the text in this section is not yet agreed.

environment. [The major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries. Rising sea levels as a result of global warming cause a grave and immediate threat to people living in island countries and coastal areas. The use of ozone-depleting substances such as products with chlorofluorocarbon, halos, foams and plastics are severely affecting the atmosphere by allowing harmful ultra-violet rays reaching the Earth's surface, causing severe effects on the health of people].

174. Eradication of poverty is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. [Poverty and environmental degradation are closely related]. [In addition, war, armed conflicts, foreign occupation and displacements are also closely related to environmental degradation.] The deterioration of natural resources displaces communities, especially women, from income-generating activities while greatly adding to unremunerated work. In both urban and rural areas, environmental degradation results in negative effects on the health, well-being and quality of life of the population at large, especially girls and women of all ages. Particular attention and recognition should be given to the role and the special situation of women living in rural areas and those working in the agricultural sector, where access to training, land, natural and productive resources, credit, development programmes and cooperative structures can help them increase their participation in sustainable development. Environmental risks in the home and workplace may have a disproportionate impact on women's health because of women's different susceptibilities to the toxic effects of various chemicals. These risks to women's health are particularly high [in urban areas as well as in areas of low income], where there is a high concentration of polluting industrial facilities.

[Through their management and use of natural resources women provide sustenance to their families and communities. As consumers, caretakers of their families and educators, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development and in their concern for the quality and sustainability of life for present and future generations. Women have expressed their commitment to create a new development paradigm that integrates environmental sustainability with gender equality and justice within and between generations as maintained in Agenda 21, chapter 24.]

172. Women remain largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation and their experience and skills in advocacy for and monitoring of proper natural resource management too often remain marginalized in policy-making and decision-making bodies, as well as in educational institutions and environment-related agencies at the managerial level. Women are rarely trained as professional natural resource managers with policy-making capacities such as land-use planners, agriculturalists, foresters, marine scientists and environmental lawyers. Even in cases where women are trained as professional natural resource managers, they are often underrepresented in formal institutions with policy-making capacities at the national, regional and international levels. Often women are not equal participants in the management of financial and corporate institutions whose decision-making most significantly affects environmental quality. Furthermore, there are institutional weaknesses in coordination between women's

non-governmental organizations and national institutions dealing with environmental issues, despite the recent rapid growth and visibility of women's non-governmental organizations working on these issues at all levels.

173. Women have often played leadership roles or taken the lead in promoting an environmental ethic, reducing resource use, and reusing and recycling resources to minimize waste and excessive consumption. Women can have a particularly powerful role in influencing sustainable consumption decisions. In addition, women's contributions to environmental management, including through grass-roots and youth campaigns to protect the environment, have often taken place at the local level, where decentralized action on environmental issues is most needed and decisive. [Women, especially indigenous women, have particular knowledge of ecological linkages and fragile ecosystem management.]* Women in many communities provide the main labour force for subsistence production, including production of seafood, hence, their role is crucial to the provision of food and nutrition, the enhancement of subsistence and the informal sector and the preservation of the environment. In certain regions, women are generally the most stable members of the community, as men often pursue work in distant locations, leaving women to safeguard the natural environment and ensure adequate and sustainable resource allocation within the household and the community.

176. The strategic actions needed for sound environmental management require a holistic, multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach. Women's participation and leadership are essential to every aspect of that approach. The recent United Nations global conferences on development, as well as regional preparatory conferences for the Fourth World Conference on Women, have all acknowledged that sustainable development policies that do not involve women and men alike will not succeed in the long run. They have called for the effective participation of women in the generation of knowledge and environmental education in decision-making and management at all levels. Women's experiences and contributions to an ecologically sound environment must therefore be central to the agenda for the twenty-first century. Sustainable development will be an elusive goal without recognizing and supporting women's contribution to environmental management.

176 bis. In addressing the lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to conservation and management of natural resources and safeguarding the environment, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, [so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects for women and men respectively].

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* Text pending review by the Indigenous Caucus.

Strategic objective K.1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels

Actions to be taken

177. By Governments, at all levels, including municipal authorities:

(b) [Ensure] opportunities for women, including indigenous women, to participate in environmental decision-making at all levels, including as managers, designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental projects;

New (c) Facilitate and increase women's access to information and education, including in the areas of science, technology and economics, thus enhancing their knowledge, skills and opportunities for participation in environmental decisions;

(d) *[Encourage, through national legislation and subject to it, that indigenous women's traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and skills, including those concerning traditional medicines, bio-diversity and indigenous technologies, are protected and improved and are respected, preserved and maintained, as envisaged by the Convention on Biological Diversity, and safeguard their intellectual property rights and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge];**

New (f) Take appropriate measures to reduce risks to women from identified environmental hazards at home, at work and in other environments, including through appropriate applications of clean technologies, taking into account the precautionary approach agreed to in the Rio Declaration;

New (g) Take measures to integrate [women's concerns and] a gender perspective in the design and implementation of, among other things, environmentally sound and sustainable [energy and] resource management mechanisms, production techniques and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas;

New (h) [Take measures to empower women as consumers to take effective environmental actions in their homes, communities and workplaces];

New (i) Promote the participation of local communities, particularly women, in identification of public service needs, spatial planning and the provision and design of urban infrastructure.

178. By Governments, international organizations and private sector institutions, as appropriate:

(a) Take into consideration gender impact in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other appropriate United Nations bodies and activities of international financial institutions;

(b) Promote involvement of women and incorporation of a gender perspective in the design, approval and execution of projects funded under the Global Environment Facility and other appropriate United Nations agencies;

(c) [Encourage the design of projects in the areas of concern to the Global Environment Facility that would benefit women and projects managed by women];

(c) bis. Establish strategies and mechanisms to increase the proportion of women, particularly at grass-roots levels, involved as decision makers, planners, managers, scientists and technical advisers and as beneficiaries in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for natural resource management and environmental protection and conservation;

New (e) Encourage social, economic, political and scientific institutions to address environmental degradation and the resulting impact on women.

179. By non-governmental organizations and the private sector:

(a) Assume advocacy of environmental and natural resource management issues of concern to women and provide information and contribute to resource mobilization for environmental protection and conservation.

(a) bis. Facilitate the access of women agriculturists, fishers and pastoralists to knowledge, skills, marketing services and environmentally sound technologies to support and strengthen their crucial roles and their expertise in resource management and the conservation of biological diversity.

Strategic objective K.2. Ensure integration of gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development

Actions to be taken

180. By Governments:

177 (c) Evaluate policies and programmes in terms of environmental impact and women's equal access to and use of natural resources;

177 (d) bis. Ensure adequate research to assess how and to what extent women are particularly susceptible or exposed to environmental degradation and hazards, include, as necessary, research and data collection on specific groups of women, particularly women with low income, indigenous women and minority women;

(a) **[Integrate rural women's traditional knowledge and practices of sustainable resource use and management in the development of environmental management and extension programmes];

(a) bis. Integrate the results of gender-sensitive research into mainstream policies with a view to developing sustainable human settlements;

(b) Promote the knowledge of and sponsor research on the role of women, focusing particularly on rural and indigenous women in food gathering and production, soil conservation, irrigation, watershed management, sanitation, coastal zone and marine resource management, integrated pest management, land-use planning, forest conservation and community forestry, fisheries, natural disaster prevention and new and renewable sources of energy, focusing particularly on indigenous women's knowledge and experience;

(c) Develop a strategy for change to eliminate all obstacles to women's full and equal participation in sustainable development and equal access to [and control over] resources;

(d) Promote the education of girls and women of all ages in science, technology and economics, and other disciplines relating to the natural environment, so that they can make informed choices and offer informed input in determining local economic, scientific and environmental priorities for the management and appropriate use of natural and local resources and ecosystems;

(e) Develop programmes to involve female professionals and scientists, as well as technical, administrative and clerical workers, in environmental management and develop training of girls and women in these fields, expand opportunities for hiring and promoting women in these fields and implement special measures to advance women's expertise and participation in these activities;

(f) Identify and promote environmentally sound technologies that have been designed, developed and improved in consultation with women and that are appropriate to both women and men;

(g) Support the development of women's equal access to housing infrastructure, safe water, sustainable and affordable energy technologies, such as wind, solar, biomass and other renewable sources, through participatory needs assessments, energy planning and policy formulation at the local and national levels;

New (h) Ensure that clean water is available and accessible to all by the year 2000 and that environmental protection and conservation plans are designed and implemented to restore polluted water systems and rebuild damaged watersheds.

181. By international organizations, non-governmental organizations and private sector institutions:

(a) Involve women in the communication industries in raising awareness regarding environmental issues, especially on the environmental and health impacts of products, technologies and industry processes;

(c) Encourage consumers to use their purchasing power to promote the production of environmentally safe products and encourage the investment in environmentally sound agricultural, fisheries, commercial and industrial activities and technologies;

(c) bis. Support women's consumer initiatives by promoting the marketing of organic food and recycling facilities, product information and [product labelling, including labelling of toxic chemicals and pesticides containers for those who are illiterate].

Strategic objective K.3. Establish or strengthen mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women

Actions to be taken

182. By Governments, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate:

(a) bis. Provide technical assistance to women, particularly in developing countries, in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries, small enterprises, trade and industry to ensure the continuing promotion of human resource development and the development of environmentally sound technologies and of women entrepreneurship;

(b) Develop gender-sensitive databases, information [and monitoring] systems and participatory action-oriented research, methodologies and policy analyses, with the collaboration of academic institutions and local women researchers on the following:

(i) Knowledge and experience on the part of women of the management and conservation of natural resources for incorporation in the databases and information systems for sustainable development;

(ii) The impact on women of environmental and natural resource degradation, deriving from, inter alia, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, drought, poor quality water, global warming, desertification, sea-level rise, hazardous waste, natural disasters, toxic chemicals and pesticide residues, radioactive waste, armed conflicts [and refugee flows];

(iii) Analysis of the structural links between gender relations, environment and development, with special emphasis on particular sectors, such as agriculture, industry, fisheries, forestry, environmental health, biological diversity, climate, water resources and sanitation;

(iv) Measures to develop and include environmental, economic, [cultural], social and gender-sensitive analyses as an essential step in the development [and monitoring] of programmes and policies;

(v) Programmes to create rural and urban training, research and resource centres that will disseminate environmentally sound technologies to women;

New (f) [Prohibit the transboundary movement of hazardous toxic and radioactive material waste].

(c) Promote coordination within and among institutions to implement the Platform for Action and chapter 24 of Agenda 21 [and, inter alia, request [the Commission on the Status of Women], the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council to [monitor and] evaluate periodically the implementation of Agenda 21 with regard to women and the environment].